

HOUSE RESOLUTION 179

By Faison

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Joanna Stanfield
Montgomery of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body pay respectful tribute to the memory of Joanna Stanfield Montgomery of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Joanna Montgomery was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on August 23, 1967, in St. Joseph, Missouri, Mrs. Montgomery moved to Middle Tennessee during her fifth-grade year of school, when her family relocated to Franklin; and

WHEREAS, after pursuing undergraduate studies at Aquinas College and Belmont University, she was hired to work as a paralegal with the offices of Stites & Harbison, Attorneys at Law; it was in this position that she discovered a passion for working closely with individuals involved in child custody and divorce cases, and met her husband, Mark Montgomery; and

WHEREAS, after dating for three years, Joanna and Mark were wed in a surprise ceremony in Nashville in August 2011 among their family and friends; the couple were expecting a child, who was slated to arrive on Christmas Eve of that year; and

WHEREAS, their baby girl, Magnolia Grace, arrived perfectly healthy, though three weeks earlier than expected, necessitating an emergency cesarean section; it was during this procedure that doctors discovered a mass on Joanna Montgomery's fallopian tube, what they would learn was an aggressive gynecologic cancer that had reached stage three, giving Mrs. Montgomery a 50/50 chance of survival; and

WHEREAS, though such a prognosis might have, understandably, subsumed her, Joanna Montgomery parlayed her gift of writing into a successful blog, *It's Cancer, Baby*, and shared her story of treatment, matrimony, and motherhood with candor and grace; her journey so resonated with readers that the blog went viral, being featured on CafeMom's *The Stir*. Mrs. Montgomery was then asked by CafeMom to write a weekly column titled "Mommy Has Cancer," and CafeMom Studios subsequently published a ten-part video documentary of her story; and

WHEREAS, Joanna Montgomery also went on to write a weekly column for the *Huffington Post* and appear as one of the first guests on Katie Couric's talk show *Katie*; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Montgomery served on the board of the Women Survivors Alliance, and she and her husband founded the nonprofit The Magnolia Foundation, named in honor of their daughter, to support patients and their families battling gynecologic cancers; and

WHEREAS, her husband, who continues the work of The Magnolia Foundation, has said, "Joanna Montgomery was the love of my life. I don't think I ever really understood what love was until I met her. She defined love through all her actions, big and small. Not just for my benefit, but for the benefit of all who came in contact with her. Selflessness is at the core of love, putting other people first. Joanna taught me this"; and

WHEREAS, he went on to say that "Most people will have to watch someone they love suffer needlessly at the hands of some kind of illness. All I wanted to do for my wife was to take away her pain and suffering; I would have even taken her place if I could have. It's tragic that some of the world's best medical research is illegal in Tennessee. Research that's discovering treatments and medicines that could have helped Joanna. And while I can't go back in time to fix the past, we can look forward together and it's clear as a bell: It's time to allow our fellow Tennesseans access to the same kinds of treatments available in over half the other states in the Union. It's time"; and

WHEREAS, Joanna Montgomery has left behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, through her authentic public presence, Joanna Montgomery inspired countless others to live with courage and strength, and it is fitting that we should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Joanna Stanfield Montgomery, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.